

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /056 W

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R 080755Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4956

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17425

CICNPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, TH, CB

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER THANIN COMMENTS ON CAMBODIA BORDER  
SITUATION AT ASEAN MEETING

REF: BANGKOK 17177

SUMMARY: IN PRESS STATEMENTS IN KUALA LUMPUR AUG 5 AND  
6 PRIME MINISTER THANIN MADE A SERIES OF COMMENTS ON  
THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER CONFLICT, WHICH REPRESENT A  
DEVELOPMENT OF THAI ATTITUDES DSCUSSED IN REFTEL.  
THANIN DEPLORED CAMBODIAN ATTACKS ON THAILAND AND  
EMPHASIZED THE THAI DESIRE TO BE FRIENDLY AND TO LIVE  
IN PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBOR. HE SAID CAMBODIA "HAS BEEN  
BEHAVING LIKE A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP" AND SAID THAT  
CAMBODIA WAS "UNREASONABLY AND UNNATURALLY AGGRESSIVE."  
HE SAID THAILAND WOULD HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO TAKE  
MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CAMBODIA IF THE BORDER AGGRESSION  
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CONTINUES. DEFENSE MINISTER SA-NGAT TOLD PRESS HE THOUGHT  
THE BORDER INCIDENTS WITH CAMBODIA MIGHT BE BASED ON  
DIFFERENT MAPS IN USE BY THE TWO COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE VERY SUBSTANTIAL REPORTING WHICH HAS BEEN DONE  
BY EMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR ON THE ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING IN  
KUALA LUMPUR, COMMENTS TO THE PRESS ON THE THAI-CAMBODIAN

BORDER SITUATION, MADE BY THAI PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN ON AUG 5 AND 6, MAY NOT HAVE ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE. THEY REPRESENT A DEVELOPMENT OF RTG ATTITUDES DISCUSSED IN REFTEL.

2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON KUALA LUMPUR AUG 6, REPORTED ON EXTENSIVELY IN BANGKOK ON AUG 7, THANIN SAID, THAT, "CAMBODIA HAS BEEN BEHAVING LIKE A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP. SINCE JANUARY 1 (I.E., 1977) CAMBODIAN TROOPS INVADED OUR TERRITORY MORE THAN 400 TIMES..... KILLING OUR WOMEN, OUR BABIES, AND UNARMED MEN.... THIS WAS MORE THAN HATRED-- IT'S BRUTALITY AND HATRED." THANIN CONTINUED THAT CAMBODIA WA, "....UNREASONABLY AND UNNATURALLY AGGRESSIVE, ALTHOUGH WE WANT TO BE FRIENDLY AND WANT TO ACHIEVE PEACE." HE SAID, ...."WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST KAMPUCHEA IF IT PERSISTS IN HER BORDER AGGRESSION." THANIN SPECULATED THAT ONE REASON FOR THE CAMBODIAN ATTACKS MIGHT BE TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM HARD-SHIPS WITHIN THE COUNTRY, WHICH HAD LED TO THE FLIGHTS OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES. ANOTHER REASON WAS THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THE COMMUNIST BLOC TO EXPAND THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA, "DESTROYING ALL OBSTACLES IN ITS WAY." THANIN SAID THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SERIOUS BORDER CLASHES RECENTLY BETWEEN COMMUNIST VIET-NAM AND CAMBODIA, WITH BOTH SIDES ENGAGED IN BOMBING RAIDS AGAINST EACH OTHER. HE SAID THE CONFIDENTIAL

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BORDER CONFLICT BETWEEN VIET-NAM AND CAMBODIA IS FAR WORSE THAN THAT BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA.

3. SPEAKING TO ABOUT 100 THAI NATIONALS AT THE THAI EMBASSY IN KUALA LUMPUR ON AUG 6, THANIN SAID THAT THE BORDER CLASHES BETWEEN THAILAND, CAMBODIA, AND LAOS PRESENTED GRAVE PROBLEMS FOR THE COUNTRY. HE SAID THAT THE THAI ARE PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE AND THAT THE THREAT OF INVASION BY KHMER SOLDIERS HAS GREATLY DISTURBED THAI VILLAGERS LIVING ALONG THE BORDER. HE STATED THAT PEOPLE LIVING IN INDO-CHINA UNDER COMMUNISM ARE FACING MANY HARSHIPS AND, FROM STORIES TOLD BY THE REFUGEES FLOWING INTO THAILAND, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE SITUATION THERE WAS VERY BAD. MANY REFUGEES SAID THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO STAY IN A THAI JAIL RATHER THAN GO BACK, THANIN SAID.

4. IN A COMMENT TO THE PRESS IN BANGKOK ON AUG 6 MINISTER OF DEFENSE SA-NGAT CHALOYU STATED THAT THE CURRENT BORDER CONFLICT ON THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER MIGHT HAVE STEMMED FROM THE FACT THAT THAILAND IS USING AN AMERICAN MAP WHILE CAMBODIA IS USING A FRENCH MAP, AND THE MAPS DO NOT EXACTLY COINCIDE.

5. COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER THANIN'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE BORDER CONFLICT WITH CAMBODIA CLEARLY BRING OUT THE THAI PREFERENCE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA BUT CONDEMN BRUTAL CAMBODIAN BEHAVIOR AND LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THAI RETALIATION.

6. MINISTER OF DEFENSE SA-NGAT'S COMMENTS ON BORDER MAPS ARE RATHER SURPRISING. ARMY MAP SERVICE MAPS, SOME VERSIONS OF WHICH HAVE PLACE NAMED IN THAI AND ARE WIDELY USED BY RTARF, CARRY THE SPECIFIC DISCLAIMER, "THE DELINEATION OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES ON THIS MAP MUST NOT BE CONSIDERED AUTHORITATIVE." POLITICAL MAPS OF THAILAND, PREPARED BY THE ROYAL THAI SURVEY DEPARMTNET (WHICH COMES CONFIDENTIAL

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UNDER SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS) CARRY THE STATEMENT THAT THE MAPS ARE "BASED ON INFORMATION OBTAINED AT THE ROYAL THAI SURVEY DEPARTMENT, SUPREME COMMADN HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, AND THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER." THE ROYAL THAI SURVEY DEPARTMENT CARRIES OUT ITS OWN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF BORDERS AND DOES DETAILED SURVEYS ON THE GROUND. IT TURNS OUT HIGH QUALITY MAPS ON ITS OWN AND DOES NOT DEPEND ON FOREIGN MAPS. CAMBODIAN MAPS, INCLUDING DETAILS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BORDERS, WERE ADJUSTED FROM ORIGIANL FRENCH VERSIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF PRINCE SIHANOUK'S GOVERNMENTS, TO REFLECT CAMBODIAN CLAIMS AGAINST BOTH VIET-NAM AND THAILAND.O'DONOHUE

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009